IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Twice amended) In a specialty paint finish roller:

a roller tube having first and second ends, at least one end being open, and an axial cavity located between first and second ends;

a natural sponge member comprising a flat strip of natural sponge of predetermined thickness connected to a base material, said strip being wound diagonally along the longitudinal axis of said roller tube and having natural sponge protrusions capable of applying paint to a surface in a positive design form; and means for rotatably connecting said roller tube to said axle.

REMARKS

Attached is a marked-up version of the changes made by the above amendment, in a page captioned "Version with Markings to Show Changes Made."

Claim 1 has been amended by incorporating the limitations of claim 2, and in addition to include the further limitation of requiring that the natural sponge be of predetermined thickness. Support for the latter phrase is found in the specification, at page 5, line 18; see also original claim 4.

The rejection of claims 1 and 3 as unpatentable over Serwer U.S. Patent No. 3,030,696 in view of Tramont U.S. Patent No. 5,693,141 is respectfully traversed. Serwer does not teach a natural sponge member of predetermined thickness. He only refers to a "sponge-type" material such as polyurethane (column 2, lines 9-10) there is nothing in Sewer that would suggest providing natural sponge in a predetermined thickness as such would require cutting of the sponge to that thickness, a step which is not required with polyurethane. Nor does Tramont make any such suggestion. The only reference in Tramont to natural sponge material is with respect to Figures 4 and 9 (column 8, line 60 to column 9, line 46). The sponge material in Figures 4 and 9 does not have a predetermined thickness but has a variable thickness.

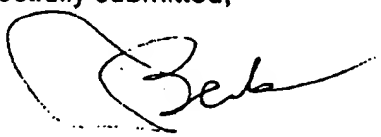
Moreover, while Sewer proposes diagonally winding a strip of polyurethane material around the longitudinal axis roller tube, there is nothing to suggest that such a procedure could be accomplished with natural sponge rubber and therefore there is no suggestion of the structure as presently claimed. Indeed, Tramont teaches directly away from the invention in requiring, with natural sponge, that his outer medium be formed by wrapping a pre-formed shape about an inner core and then affixing the pre-formed shape to the inner core (column 9, lines 6-9). A simple inspection of Figures 4 and 9 reveals that such wrapping is not a result of diagonal winding.

Therefore, when the art deals with the natural sponge material, the only teaching is to use a variable thickness, not predetermined, and pre-formation, not diagonal winding.

Applicant believes that the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully solicits a Notice of Allowance.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in the fees files, asserted to be filed or which should have been filed herewith (or with any paper hereafter filed in this application by this firm) to our Deposit Account No. 50-0337. A duplicate copy of this paper is enclosed.

Respectfully submitted,



Dated: October 10, 2002

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Docket No. 7091-103N1/10102873
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Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Twice amended) In a specialty paint finish roller:

a roller tube having first and second ends, at least one end being open, and an axial cavity located between first and second ends;

a natural sponge member [formed on] comprising a flat strip of natural sponge of predetermined thickness connected to a base material, said strip being wound diagonally along the longitudinal axis of said roller tube and having natural sponge protrusions capable of applying paint to a surface in a positive design form; and means for rotatably connecting said roller tube to said axle.